

**21st Meeting of the Working Group to the Aarhus Convention  
(Geneva, 4-6 April 2017)**

**Statements by the Government of Georgia**

**Agenda item 2: Status of ratification of the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers**

Recently developed and planned activities in the country will create an opportunity to the development of the national PRTR, in particular:

- Since January 2017 the PRTR relevant online information system of Air Emissions from stationary (point) sources is operating. More than 3000 entities already submitted online reports, which include environmental information appropriate to the PRTR and will be used for the national PRTR in the future. An interactive map was activated under this online information system in March 2017, including the public information on the emissions into the air from stationary sources ([map.emoe.gov.ge](http://map.emoe.gov.ge));
- It is planned to start Waste electronic accounting and reporting as well as online reporting of water use in 2018; entire Waste Information System will be developed and implemented by 2020;
- With support of the EU, the Twinning Project “Strengthening the administrative capacities of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia for approximation and implementation of the EU environmental 'acquis' in the fields of industrial pollution and industrial hazards” (IPPC) was started in 2017. Under the project, the MENRP will introduce IPPC system that will be additional tool for the national register.

**Agenda item 3 (a): Access to Information**

Signing of Association Agreement between EU and Georgia in 2014, which entered into force in 2016, supported the country to do more on environmental directions at the national level in direction of legislation improvement, institutional strengthening and coordination, as well as in the development of practical implementation tools, in particular:

- It was only last year (2016) when the definition of the term “Environmental Information”, that is fully in line with the definition of environmental information under the Aarhus Convention and the respective EU directive, was incorporated in the law of Georgia on Environmental Protection;
- The Government of Georgia issued an Order in February 2017 that will support the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia (MENRP) to establish environmental geo-data system and thus facilitate wider access to specific environmental information;

- For the proper functioning of environmental geo-data system, Agreement between the MENRP and the National Agency of Public Registry of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia was signed in February 2017;
- Commission on coordination of environmental information systems was established by the Ministerial Order (MENRP) in February 2017;
- The Ministerial Order (MENRP) on adoption of rule of proactive dissemination of environmental information, standard of request of information in electronic form, and a rule of access to information was issued in March 2017;
- For more efficient functioning of the Environmental Information and Education Centre of MENRP, that was established on the basis of the Aarhus Centre Georgia with expanded tasks and capacity, all units and subordinated bodies of the MENRP were officially obliged in 2016 to nominate responsible persons to provide all relevant and necessary environmental information to the Centre on a regular basis or immediately in a user friendly format for the public.

### **Agenda item 3 (b): Public Participation in decision-making**

With support of EU and UNECE through EaP Green Programme, the MENRP elaborated an Environmental Assessment Code that has already been submitted to the Parliament of Georgia for its approval.

The Government of the Netherlands and the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (NCEA) assisted the MENRP in the establishment and further development of SEA Contribution to the development of the regulatory framework for SEA.

By developing the Environmental Assessment Code:

- First, Georgia expressed its strong desire to implement the obligations under the EU-Georgia AA and be in compliance with respective EU *acquis* and international treaties;
- The Code establishes a legal basis for regulating issues related to projects and strategic documents, implementation of which may have significant impact on the environment, human health and people's lives;
- It regulates procedures related to EIA, SEA, transboundary EIA, and public participation in decision-making and carrying out expertise;
- The Code establishes wider and effective public participation procedure (e.g. public participation at the early stage, expanded list of activities and prolonged time for public participation, etc.).